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State Health Information Exchange Streamlines Public Health Reporting in Louisiana

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Health Information Exchange (LaHIE) can now facilitate public health reporting in Louisiana, allowing enrolled health care providers and hospitals to submit immunization data, lab results and syndromic surveillance information to be forwarded to the appropriate state offices for processing.

LaHIE provides authorized providers and organizations, such as the Louisiana Office of Public Health and the Louisiana Immunization Network for Kids Statewide (LINKS), the opportunity to electronically access and share health-related information through a secure and confidential network for the purpose of improving patient safety, quality of care and health outcomes.

The ability of LaHIE to streamline, or automate, mandatory public health reporting for providers and hospitals is a key element of meeting Meaningful Use (MU) of electronic health records, explains Nadine Robin, Health Information Technology Program Manager for the Quality Forum.

MU requires providers and hospitals to submit one type of reporting – such as immunizations, electronic laboratory results or syndromic surveillance – electronically, says Robin, adding that LaHIE's ability to do all three means a reduction in administrative burden and less work for those providers and hospitals.

“Submitting public health reporting information through LaHIE allows hospitals and providers to provide valuable data to the Office of Public Health without the increased burden of manual data submission. Also,

because LaHIE is able to streamline the reporting to multiple divisions of public health, hospitals can easily exceed the expectations of Meaningful Use,” according to Robin.

The fusion of health information technology (HIT) with public health reporting also means the state can identify and address dangers to the health of its residents more quickly, according to DHH Office of Public Health Assistant Secretary J.T. Lane.

“By integrating the latest advances in health information technology with our programs, we further strengthen our effectiveness at combating threats to the health of Louisiana residents,” says Lane. “Being able to see health data in real time will help us make stronger policy decisions, and can help us respond faster in a disease outbreak, natural disaster or other crises.”

Josh Hardy, State Health Information Technology Coordinator, adds, “This capability can help improve the efficiency and quality of public health reporting, which will enable our Office of Public Health to more rapidly detect the early warning signs of both natural and man-made disease trends or outbreaks that may impact the health of the public. LaHIE makes this reporting almost effortless for our health care professionals providing care to emergency departments across the state.”

LaHIE’s facilitation of public health reporting has already proven beneficial to health care facilities such as Opelousas General Health System. Jared Lormand, Vice President of Information Technology and CIO, notes that Opelousas recently began submitting syndromic surveillance data to the Louisiana Department of Public Health via LaHIE.

“This has greatly reduced the amount of time we spend gathering, quantifying and submitting this data,” Lormand adds.

Edwina Mallery, AVP of Information Systems at Lafayette General Medical Center, agrees, “Partnering with the LaHIE initiative allowed us to provide timely and meaningful information to providers in our community and across parish lines. Our goal was to improve care and reduce redundant costs that our patients may be experiencing from duplicative tests and/or procedures.”

Mallery notes that Lafayette General Medical Center’s overall vision has been to promote continuity of care in a secure environment for patients by facilitating access to their health records with providers, and explains that prior to LaHIE, the information exchange process “depended on making a phone call to request information and/or copying records or faxing information to authorized providers.”

Thanks to LaHIE, says Mallery, “Our sites are exchanging demographics and patient care information such as allergies, medication, lab/radiology results and clinical summaries.” She adds, “The Quality Forum worked with us on these items and produced a successful exchange.”

The Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum serves as the state-designated entity for the implementation of LaHIE. In addition to improved public health reporting, benefits of LaHIE include better care coordination and patient management; timely access to patient records; improved patient safety; increased security of records; enhanced patient-physician communication; and reduced health care costs.

For more information about the exchange or public health reporting via LaHIE, please email lahie@lhccf.org or contact the Quality Forum at 225.334.9299.

About the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state citizens. To learn more about DHH, visit <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov>. For up-to-date health information, news and emergency updates, follow DHH's [blog](#), [Twitter](#) account and [Facebook](#).

About the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum

The Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum is a private, not-for-profit organization, dedicated to advancing evidence-based, collaborative initiatives to improve the health of Louisiana residents. Its focus areas include quality measurement and analytics, clinical quality improvement, the patient-centered medical home/care coordination model, LaPOST awareness and education, outreach/education and health information technology (IT). With regard to health IT, the Forum is the State-Designated Entity to support health care providers and critical access/rural hospitals as they adopt and meaningfully use electronic health records and to lead the planning and implementation of the state's health information exchange. For more information, visit www.lhcqf.org.

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